



**You will need to produce an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) if:**

- You are developing a new policy, strategy, or service
- You are making changes that will affect front-line services
- You are reducing budgets, which may affect front-line services
- You are changing the way services are funded and this may impact the quality of the service and who can access it
- You are making a decision that could have a different impact on different groups of people
- You are making staff redundant or changing their roles

Guidance notes on how to complete an EqIA and sign off process are available on the Hub under Equality and Diversity. You must read the [guidance notes](#) and ensure you have followed all stages of the EqIA approval process. Section 2 of the template requires you to undertake an assessment of the impact of your proposals on groups with protected characteristics. Borough profile data and other sources of statistical information on each group can be found on the Harrow hub, within the section entitled: Equality Impact Assessment - [Borough profile data](#) and other sources of information to help you complete your EqIA template.

## Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)

<b>Type of Decision:</b>	<input type="radio"/> Cabinet <input type="radio"/> Portfolio holder <input checked="" type="radio"/> Other (state)	
<b>Title of Proposal</b>	Amendment to Council Tax Premiums	<b>Date EqIA created 12.9.18</b> <b>Reviewed after online consultation ended 29.11.2018</b>
<b>Value of savings to be made (if applicable):</b>	N/A	
<b>Name and job title of completing/lead Officer</b>	Lynn Allaker Revenues Service Manager	
<b>Directorate/ Service responsible</b>		
<b>Organisational approval</b>		
<b>EqIA approved by Directorate Equality Task Group (DETG) Chair</b>	<b>Name</b>  Alex Dewsnap	<b>Signature</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Tick this box to indicate that you have approved this EqIA</b>  <b>Date of approval 21/12/2018</b>

**1. Summary of proposal, impact on groups with protected characteristics and mitigating actions**  
(to be completed after you have completed sections 2 - 5)

**a) What is your proposal?** Central Government is proposing to issue updated regulations to allow local authority to increase the level of Council Tax premium where properties have been left empty and unoccupied for more than 2 years. This will impact on owners of 2<sup>nd</sup> properties, Housing Associations, LB Harrow Housing department, property developers.

The proposal covers the following:

- Implement 100% premium on long term empty properties where the property has been empty for between 2 and 5 years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019
- Implement 200% premium on long term empty properties where the property has been empty for between 5 and 10 years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020
- Implement 300% premium on long term empty properties where the property has been empty for more than 10 years from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021

Initial calculations suggested that only 79 properties would be impacted by this change but only 48 from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 which would generate an additional income of just under £200,000. The determination needs to be made by members as part of the tax setting process so that the correct demands can be issued by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019 and any additional income considered for the budget calculations for 2019-20

**b) Summarise the impact of your proposal on groups with protected characteristics**

None identified

**c) Summarise any potential negative impact(s) identified and mitigating actions**

N/a

<b>2. Assessing impact</b>					
You are required to undertake a detailed analysis of the impact of your proposals on groups with protected characteristics. You should refer to <a href="#">borough profile data</a> , <a href="#">equalities data</a> , service user information, consultation responses and any other relevant data/evidence to help you assess and explain what impact (if any) your proposal(s) will have on <b>each</b> group. Where there are gaps in data, you should state this in the boxes below and what action (if any), you will take to address this in the future.		What does the evidence tell you about the impact your proposal may have on groups with protected characteristics? Click the relevant box to indicate whether your proposal will have a positive impact, negative (minor, major), or no impact			
Protected characteristic	For <b>each</b> protected characteristic, explain in detail what the evidence is suggesting and the impact of your proposal (if any). Click the appropriate box on the right to indicate the outcome of your analysis.	Positive impact	Negative impact		No impact
			Minor	Major	
<b>Age</b>	This proposal is only affecting empty properties. Where the property has been left empty as the resident is receiving care which may be due to age then this policy change will not affect them as there is a council tax exemption which applies.. Council Tax is only payable by persons over the age of 18. Age is not held on the Council Tax system unless noted as an indicator of vulnerability. This policy is dependent on the length of time the property has remained empty not on a council tax payers age.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Disability</b>	This proposal is only affecting empty properties where they have been empty for 2 years or more. This should allow any customers who need additional support to sell or rent their 2 <sup>nd</sup> property time to get this in place. This policy is dependent on the length of time the property has remained empty not on a council tax payers disability. A customers disability will only be held on the Council tax records if they are:-  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Claiming a disabled band reduction which is only applicable on occupied properties</li> <li>b) Claiming a discount as a carer of someone else in the property which is only applicable on occupied properties</li> <li>c) Claiming a discount as severely mentally impaired which is only applicable on occupied properties</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Gender reassignment</b>	This proposal is only affecting empty properties. This policy is dependent on the length of time the property has remained empty not on a council tax payers gender reassignment. This information is not held on the Council tax records.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<b>Marriage and Civil Partnership</b>	This proposal is only affecting empty properties where they have been empty for 2 years or more. Whilst a council taxpayers title may be held on our records, this policy is dependent on the length of time the property has remained empty not on a council tax payers marital or civil partnership status.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Pregnancy and Maternity</b>	This proposal is only affecting empty properties where they have been empty for 2 years or more. This policy is dependent on the length of time the property has remained empty not on a council tax payers pregnancy or maternity status. This information is not held on the Council tax records unless it has been noted as indicator of vulnerability.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Race/ Ethnicity</b>	This proposal is only affecting empty properties where they have been empty for 2 years or more This policy is dependent on the length of time the property has remained empty not on a council tax payers race/ethnicity. This information is not held on the Council tax records.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Religion or belief</b>	This proposal is only affecting empty properties where they have been empty for 2 years or more. This policy is dependent on the length of time the property has remained empty not on a council tax payers religion/belief.. This information is not held on the Council tax records.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sex</b>	This proposal is only affecting empty properties where they have been empty for 2 years or more This policy is dependent on the length of time the property has remained empty not on a council tax payers sex.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	This proposal is only affecting empty properties where they have been empty for 2 years or more. This policy is dependent on the length of time the property has remained empty not on a council tax payers sexual orientation. This information is not held on the Council tax records.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**2.1 Cumulative impact – considering what else is happening within the Council and Harrow as a whole, could your proposals have a cumulative impact on groups with protected characteristics?**

Yes                      No   

If you clicked the Yes box, which groups with protected characteristics could be affected and what is the potential impact? Include details in the space below

**3. Actions to mitigate/remove negative impact**

**Only complete this section if your assessment (in section 2) suggests that your proposals may have a negative impact on groups with protected characteristics. If you have not identified any negative impacts, please complete sections 4 and 5.**

In the table below, please state what these potential negative impact (s) are, mitigating actions and steps taken to ensure that these measures will address and remove any negative impacts identified and by when. Please also state how you will monitor the impact of your proposal once implemented.

State what the negative impact(s) are for <b>each</b> group, identified in section 2. In addition, you should also consider and state potential risks associated with your proposal.	Measures to mitigate negative impact (provide details, including details of and additional consultation undertaken/to be carried out in the future). If you are unable to identify measures to mitigate impact, please state so and provide a brief explanation.	What action (s) will you take to assess whether these measures have addressed and removed any negative impacts identified in your analysis? Please provide details. If you have previously stated that you are unable to identify measures to mitigate impact please state below.	Deadline date	Lead Officer

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#### 4. Public Sector Equality Duty

How does your proposal meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
3. Foster good relations between people from different groups

#### Include details in the space below

An online consultation was carried out between 29<sup>th</sup> October 2018 and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2018. Two responses were received, 1 from the GLA and 1 from a Harrow Council Tax payer.

*“The GLA supports the proposals for the revised long term empty property premiums proposed by Harrow in its consultation. The Mayor is committed to tackling London’s housing crisis; as such, the GLA has welcomed the additional flexibilities provided to billing authorities by central government, with the aim of bringing more empty homes back into use.*

*The Council has proposed these changes based on the clear rationale that the increases in the premium are intended to change behaviour, in order to reduce the number of properties that are ‘long-term empty’. The borough faces a housing shortage, as do other areas of London. In addition, the Council notes that empty homes tend to attract anti-social behaviour and consequent additional costs to public services*

*Whilst reducing the number of empty homes is clearly the primary objective of the premium, the GLA has previously encouraged billing authorities to consider the impact of the additional revenue councils can raise from the current 50% empty homes premium, when determining schemes for council tax support. If the increases in the premium permitted under the new legislation result in significant additional revenues, we recommend the Council should take these into account if, in the future, it is reviewing changes to its council tax support scheme”.*

*“ They agreed with the current policy that if a property is not in use as anyone’s sole or main residence that they should pay more council tax  
They agreed with the proposal that if it has not been used for between 2-5 years the Council Tax charge should be 200%  
They agreed with the proposal that if a property has not been used for between 5-10 years the Council Tax charge should be 300%  
They agreed with the proposal that if a property has not been used for over 10 years the Council Tax charge should be 400%*

*Their general comments were:-*

*I believe that if the property is left empty for over 5 years then there should be an investigation on the reasons behind this and also a complete inspection should be done on the property to investigate its state.*

*if it is found that the property is not in a specified standards and the owner is not putting any effort to maintain the property then some sort of order must be issued to make the owner sell the property to either a property developer or housing agency or at a cheaper rate to first time buyer so that they can get the property upto standard and either rent it out or sold to others who need help to get on property ladder”*

As only 1 respondent was received I have not summarised their responses to the protected characteristics but as can be seen from Part 2 this policy is not based on any protected characteristics and the numbers potentially affected are less than 0.01% of the total Council Tax properties in the borough.

#### 5. Outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) click the box that applies

**Outcome 1**

**No change required: the EqIA has not identified any potential for disproportionate impact and all opportunities to advance equality of opportunity are being addressed**

**Outcome 2**

**Adjustments to remove/mitigate negative impacts identified by the assessment, or to better advance equality, as stated in section 3&4**

**Outcome 3**

**This EqIA has identified missed opportunities to advance equality and/or foster good relations. However, it is still reasonable to continue with the activity. Outline the reasons for this and the information used to reach this decision in the space below.**